

Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer

43rd Assembly District, including the areas of Glendale, Burbank and Los Angeles.

2004 Legislative Accomplishments

December 2004

2004 was a year of legislative wins and losses for the constituents of California. Together, the new Governor and the Democrats were able to pass a comprehensive overhaul of California's workers' compensation system, pass Propositions 57 and 58, get a budget passed and institute groundbreaking statewide nursing home reform I introduced. The Governor also signed a bill I introduced to ensure asthmatic children have the tools they need to manage their condition and my bill to set up a historic Parkinson's Disease Registry in California. However, the Governor also missed several opportunities to save taxpayers and consumers critical dollars. He vetoed bills that would have allowed consumers to purchase prescription drugs online from Canada for 40% to 75% less and allowed the state to consolidate its drug purchasing for state agencies and negotiate better discounts to save taxpayer dollars.

Frommer saves \$1.3 billion of taxpayers' dollars

A tough new law to crack down on tax cheaters, created by Frommer and signed by Governor Davis in 2003, raked in \$1.3 billion for the state of California, more than 10 times initial expectations.

"We can not ask Californians who have diligently paid their taxes properly to pay any additional money to the state until we recoup the \$600 million to \$1 billion California loses every year to tax cheats who use illegal tax shelters to skirt their responsibilities."

The bill significantly stiffened penalties for tax cheats who use illegal tax shelters. In addition, the bill set up a voluntary amnesty program that created a \$1.3 billion windfall for the state in 2004, helping to ease the strain of the budget crisis in California.

Almost 300 corporations and 568 individuals handed over an average of \$1.15 million in owed taxes to the state during the program.

Landmark nursing home care reforms signed

This bill will allow the state to tap into \$250 million of additional federal Medicaid funds for nursing homes and then tie increased funding for facilities to higher staffing, direct resident services and better pay and benefits for caregivers.

"These reforms respond to the crisis gripping California's nursing homes by rewarding those who provide the quality of care our loved ones deserve," Frommer said.

Parkinson's Disease Registry to be created in California

AB 2248, by Frommer, was signed into law, authorizing the collection of data related to Parkinson's Disease patients in the state, a significant step toward finding a cure for the disease, which affects about 200,000 in California.

Assembly Majority Leader Frommer wins awards

Antonio Villaraigosa Award, Los Angeles County Deputy Probation Officers Union, 2004

Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California Legislator of the Year Award, 2004

Governor vetoes groundbreaking Rx drug bills

Governor Schwarzenegger refused to sign two bills by Frommer that would have combated skyrocketing prescription drug prices and brought relief to millions of Californians struggling to buy their medications.

Frommer's bills would have:

- Set up a state Web site providing comparisons between American and Canadian Rx prices and links to Canadian pharmacies that meet state guidelines for safety, access and affordability.
- Allowed state agencies, HMOs and small Businesses that all buy prescription drugs to join forces and negotiate for lower prices from pharmaceutical companies by buying in bulk.

Rx Drug Quick Facts

Americans pay more for Rx drugs than anyone else in the world, including Great Britain, Canada and Japan.

Americans fund 1/3 of research and development for drugs but can not afford to buy them when they're sick.

1/3 of Americans say they can't afford their prescriptions

35% of seniors without drug coverage polled say they skip doses, cut pills, or skip medications altogether

Both bills passed the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support and were then vetoed.

WHAT ASSEMBLY MAJORITY LEADER FROMMER SAYS...

"Americans are paying more for prescription drugs than any country in the world," Frommer said. "Democratic and Republican governors in 10 other states have stood up to the drug companies and implemented legislation like mine to give citizens relief from skyrocketing prices. But in California, Governor Schwarzenegger's message to families struggling to afford prescription drugs is 'hasta la vista.'"

Child Asthma Equipment Ensured Coverage

Assembly Bill 2185 by Frommer was signed into law, requiring health service plans to include coverage for devices needed for the treatment of asthma in children, including: inhaler spaces, nebulizers and peak flow meters.

Asthma Facts

600,000 California children are afflicted with asthma.

Asthma has increased in children by 160% since 1980.

Asthma is now considered the leading cause of school absenteeism.

Child Autism Bill Vetoed

The Governor vetoed AB 839 by Frommer which would have established an Autism Resource Center for California – a sort of one-stop location where parents of children with autism could find all the resources and information they need to navigate available state and educational programs.

Frommer works to fix state workers' compensation system

The Governor signed Frommer's AB 2866, which for the first time places the names of individuals and companies convicted of committing workers' compensation fraud on a Department of Insurance Web site. This historic legislation builds on work lawmakers have already done to help solve California's workers' compensation crisis.

At a forum on workers' compensation that Frommer hosted as chairman of the Assembly Select Committee on Small Business, members of the 43rd Assembly District said again and again that workers' compensation was their number one concern. In response, Frommer and his fellow legislators rolled up their sleeves and dug deep into the problem, coming up with SB 899 to complement legislation in 2003. Together, the two measures are expected to cut \$14 billion from California's workers' compensation system.

SB 899 provides financial incentives to encourage businesses to get their injured employees back to work as quickly as possible, allows employers to contract with a network of doctors for workers' compensation, allows employers to apportion injuries to any non-work cause and allows employers to cap temporary disability at 104 weeks from the first payment.

Frommer fights for funding in budget

Assembly Majority Leader Frommer was able to win three significant budget victories for his constituents this year, securing funding for college students, K-12 schools and our mosquito and vector control districts.

UC and CSU Students

More than 11,000 qualified high school seniors who were denied access to UC or CSU schools because of proposed cuts in the Governor's budget were instead admitted, thanks to the diligence of Frommer and other legislators who protested the cuts and urged that the funding be restored.

Equalization Funding

Frommer pushed for earmarking \$80 million of state funds for equalization funding this year, bringing Glendale and Burbank school districts, as well as Glendale Community College, significantly more funding than expected.

Received:

GUSD: \$966,800

BUSD: \$376,317

GCC: \$1,630,137

West Nile Virus

Frommer successfully urged the Governor to reverse proposed cuts slashing \$12 million from California's mosquito abatement districts.

He also successfully lobbied for the Budget Conference Committee to replace \$1 million in funding for state West Nile virus surveillance, prevention and control.

Freeway memorial sign erected for fallen Officer Matthew Pavelka

The Burbank Police Department and Frommer commemorated the one-year anniversary of fallen Burbank Police Officer Matthew Pavelka by dedicating a 3-mile stretch of the Golden State (5) Freeway to Pavelka's memory.

Pavelka, 26, was killed in the line of duty on November 15, 2003 by two alleged gang members, after arriving to assist fellow officer Gregory Campbell in a routine traffic stop. Rookie Pavelka had served only 10 months with the Burbank Police Department before becoming the first officer killed in the department's 82-year history.

Frommer introduced and passed through the Legislature a resolution to rename a portion of the Golden State (5) Freeway the "Burbank Police Officer Matthew Pavelka Memorial Freeway." The signs, which were unveiled at the Burbank Police Department on November 15, 2004, will be placed directly parallel to the location on San Fernando Road where Pavelka was killed.

Governor signs benefits bill for Pavelka

The Governor signed legislation by Frommer that changes a quirk in state law that has prevented the family of slain Burbank Police Officer Matthew Pavelka from receiving death benefits.

Just six weeks after Pavelka, 26, was killed in the line of duty on November 15, 2003, the California Labor Code was changed to provide for the payment of \$250,000 to the estate of a deceased police officer if the officer was killed on or after January 1, 2004. Without a change in the law, the Pavelka family would not have received any of those benefits for the loss of their son.

Frommer bill curbs traffic light abuse

Legislation by Frommer, signed into law by the Governor, cracks down on criminals who illegally purchase mobile infrared transmitters (MIRTs) for as little as \$100 on the Internet.

This technology, authorized for use by emergency vehicles, public transportation and law enforcement and agencies, can change traffic lights.

"While every driver dreams of being able to change a light from red to green when they're in a hurry, these MIRTs can cause havoc on our streets in the wrong hands," Frommer said.